

AIGSU

spring 2011 report

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Friends,

Amnesty International at Georgia Southern University began in Spring 2011. Immense gratitude goes out to everyone for all that you have done to make that first semester successful. We hosted several events to educate Georgia Southern campus about human rights abuses around the globe. We signed petitions online and offline. We wrote 16 official letters to heads of states and organizations, addressing the human rights violations taking place in their constituencies. We made videos commemorating the deaths of peaceful protestors. We reached out to individuals outside Georgia Southern. Together with STAND, we hosted an educational movie about Rwandan genocide. With MSA, we participated in a candlelight vigil for the revolutionaries in Middle East. It was an eventful semester indeed.

Our activities have definitely had an impact. While we may be a quantitatively small section of Amnesty International, qualitatively our voices and efforts are as crucial as anyone out there. Let me tell you some of the accomplishments of motivated ordinary individuals like you and me.

Right here in the United States, outrage from Amnesty International members over the alarmingly high levels of sexual violence against Native American and Alaska Native women resulted in President Obama and Congress enacting the historic Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010. 45,000 individual cases of prisoners have been resolved with Amnesty International's help. A particular case in which AIGSU has been involved was the case of Binayak Sen. A dedicated human rights activist, Binayek Sen was arrested for providing medical help to the oppressed indigenous population of India. Together with numerous other organizations across the world, AIGSU stood up to free Binayak Sen and he was released eventually.

As you can tell, all that and more has been made possible through the mobilization of everyday people like us. It is us who inspired, pressured and warned people in power that we wouldn't accept injustice. Indeed, faced with violation of basic human rights and breakdown of civil law, what can one do? One does whatever one *can* do. Write letters. Shout out. Talk. There is no such thing as a pointless action. To say or not to say are both activities. This reminds me of Sartre's words, "Let us sign [petitions and letters] indeed! Anything is better than a mutism that might appear [as] acceptance."

We say NO to mutism!

Efadul Huq

Interviewing Nadia Dreid

Jordan Logue and Tim Willis talk to Nadia Dreid, a Libyan-American and GSU student from Statesboro

Q. How do you feel about the NATO's intervention?
A. All Libyans that I know were very supportive.

Q. What do you think about America's role as the lead nation or not as the lead nation in the Libyan conflict?
A. Civilian casualties have gone up slightly since America has handed over the lead, but I'm not sure if it has made any significant difference.

Q. How do you feel about the comparisons between Iraq and Afghanistan to Libya?
A. Libya is so different from Iraq or Afghanistan. The people of Libya were literally begging for help, and Gaddafi stands alone with his mercenary army. No one supports him. He literally has to pay for support from people who are mainly from other countries. They said that American troops would be greeted as liberators in Afghanistan and Iraq, but it didn't turn out that way. But people in Libya want the help.

Q. So the Libyan people have a favorable view of America's actions?
A. A lot of people [in Libya] are afraid because the region hasn't changed in so long. But when they see the American planes overhead, they say, "They are our planes. Not U.S. plane, our planes."

Q. So was this truly a youth revolt, or was everyone involved in it from the beginning?
A. It started as a youth revolt, but now everyone is involved. The people have been suffering under Gaddafi for decades, and they hit their breaking point. This did kind of all start on the internet. The internet was not censored, but then when the turmoil started, they just shut down the whole internet.

Q. How did you react when you found out that there would actually be intervention from the U.N., the U.S., and other international powers?
A. Oh, we called our family in Tripoli and told them to stay in the house. We told them to stay indoors for like three days. It would be just like Gaddafi to round up a bunch of civilians in the street and "organize" them into a pro-Gaddafi rally. And we didn't want them to get hurt if something happened at the rally.

Q. Eman al-Obeidy came forward with the rape allegations about Gaddaffi's forces and everyone saw how the government reacted to her. Do you think that is how things always go in Libya?
A. Eman al-Obeidy is a perfect example of how they handle criticism; beat her, put a bag over her head, and take her away while telling everyone wild stories about her. If she had said that anywhere but in front of the foreign news cameras, she would be dead. They said she was a prostitute, a liar, they said they had released her when they didn't. It was just so many lies to try to keep Gaddafi's image clean.

Q. Do you think that there can be a peaceful resolution without Gaddafi being killed or thrown out of office?
A. No Libyans will accept him, his children, or any of his henchmen in a position of power. And he will not leave on his own. He has said that many times. They will find him like Saddam Hussein, like in a hole like a rat, before he leaves on his own.

Q. We've already contrasted Libya to Iraq and Afghanistan. What made Libya so different from Egypt and all the other countries in the Arab world that are currently in so much turmoil from people protesting the governments?
A. Well, since Gaddafi took over in a military coup, he knew exactly what the army could do, so he intentionally kept it small and filled it with people who just *loved* him. That's what made Libya different. Egypt and Tunisia had militaries that abandoned the leadership to protect the people.



Libya

Follow-up

Several cities throughout Libya remain engulfed in violence as the armed conflict between Colonel Gaddafi's forces and the Libyan rebels enters its sixth month. The United Kingdom has now recognized the rebel led National Transitional Council as the active government of Libya. Furthermore, Human Rights Watch published a report detailing current negotiations within the UN Security Council to grant Gaddafi amnesty for the international crimes carried out against civilians. Human Rights Watch condemned this prospect as a move that would establish a "dangerous precedent" as it relates to the treatment of other violators of human rights. AIGSU will continue to follow the developments in Libya to ensure that the human rights of its people are protected.

amnesty international at georgia southern university

1332 Southern Drive
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2/24/11

Embassy of Libya in Washington, D.C.
2600 Virginia Avenue, NW
Suite 705,
Washington DC, 20037, USA

From Mohammad Bouazizi square in Tunisia, Tahrir Square in Egypt, Pearl Roundabout in Bahrain, to Sana'a Square in Yemen, millions of people throughout the Middle East and North Africa have began to voice grievances against their governments in an effort to gain some measure of justice from public officials. The latest country in this rolling wave of civil protest is Libya. In the capital city of Tripoli and the eastern city of Benghazi, thousands of citizens are now fending for their lives.

Based on reports published by Human Rights Watch, 62 people have been killed in violent confrontations with security forces since February 20th and the death toll, as of February 23rd, is said to have exceeded 300 people. Latest reports reveal instances of security forces sniping civilians from rooftops, mass bombings, the use of anti-aircraft weaponry, the indiscriminate firing of heavy artillery machine guns, and the raiding of hospitals in order to execute doctors who are attempting to treat the injured. We are shocked by the images and videos coming out of Libya attesting to these crimes, namely, the video of a group of men bathing a deceased infant, a thirteen year boy being carried away after being shot in the head by a sniper rifle, grotesque images of men blown apart at the torso and a photograph of a young man with a gaping head wound leaking brain matter.

In view of these egregious acts of violence, we, in the strongest terms, demand that security forces end this unwarranted use of force, as these acts constitute severe breaches of international law. We are also imploring that all foreign mercenaries leave the country immediately, that the indiscriminate killings of Libyan protestors cease, and that the government suspend the national blackout on Internet usage.

In the preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, drafters reacted to the unspeakable suffering that had ravaged populations around the globe during World War II, stating their condemnation of human rights abusers and how these abusers' "contempt for human rights resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech." Likewise, the "barbarous acts" of Libyan security forces and mercenaries have aroused outrage in the conscience of human rights defenders and the international community. Therefore, in accordance with fundamental principles of human rights, we urge the Libyan government to discontinue these atrocities and allow the citizens of Libya to exercise their rights as enshrined in the Universal Declaration. Any departure from this course of action would not only constitute a crime against the citizens of Libya but a crime against humanity. Rest assured, we will move forward unflaggingly to help amend these injustices perpetrated against innocent people, and we urgently insist that the Libyan government join us in this effort.

Yours Sincerely,

Amnesty International at Georgia Southern University

MULTICULTURAL VENDOR EXPO

COME JOIN AIGSU
IN SUPPORTING GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS

and enjoy some Syrian Mint Lemonade - a refreshing drink to fuel your resistance against the April heat!



EVENT

On 14 April 2011, AIGSU decided to sell Syrian Mint Lemonade as a fundraiser event at the Multicultural Vendor Expo. Given the recent uprisings in the Middle-East and North Africa, AIGSU introduced a Syrian delicacy, albeit a small part of Syria's grand food culture, on the GSU campus. The turnout was unexpected. In a few hours time, all the Syrian mint lemonade was sold out!

AIGSU

shahriarshamim.deviantart.com

We think...

Well, I like to think locally and a human rights problem that I'm really passionate about and outspoken about is the gay rights issue. In the south, as you may imagine, it's been hard to try to be myself with all the restrictions and disapproval of the people. It is really hard to be yourself. There are a lot of campaigns about how being a homosexual is a sin and stuff, and some companies are really strict about who they hire for those reason, like Chick-fil-a. A lot of politicians are really against doing anything to stop things like bullying or even hate crimes against the homosexual community and that just pisses me off. I don't know how to explain this more, but this is what I have for now.

— Nadim Khatib

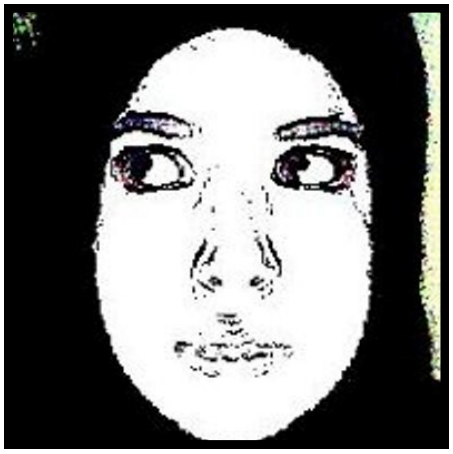


There are a lot of human rights issues to be concerned about, as the world is not as nice of a place as I'd like it to be. One issue that I feel gets overlooked at times has to do with political prisoners. Although the list of unnecessarily imprisoned individuals is large, and although this isn't a new issue, I became aware of it, sadly, when Vogue ran an article



about Aung San Suu Kyi. Her story is gripping, and it's a shame that she, like so many others, was kept captive for her human rights efforts. I'm also very interested in what's going on in the Middle East, of course, but I'm sure everyone has heard about that lately, and is tuned into the exciting world changes.

— Mary Stephens



As a Libyan-American, my current concerns are mostly wrapped up in the situation there and in other countries throughout the Middle-East in their struggle for freedom.

Libya, among many other Arab countries, has lived under tyranny for so long, most people don't even remember what freedom tastes like. Freedom of speech and media is nonexistent, and now that the people have risen up demanding their rights, Gaddafi isn't going to go easily.

He has bombed and open-fired on peaceful protesters from the very beginning, and has a forty-two year history of doing so. Under Gaddafi, there is no room for freedom and human rights. — Nadia Dreid



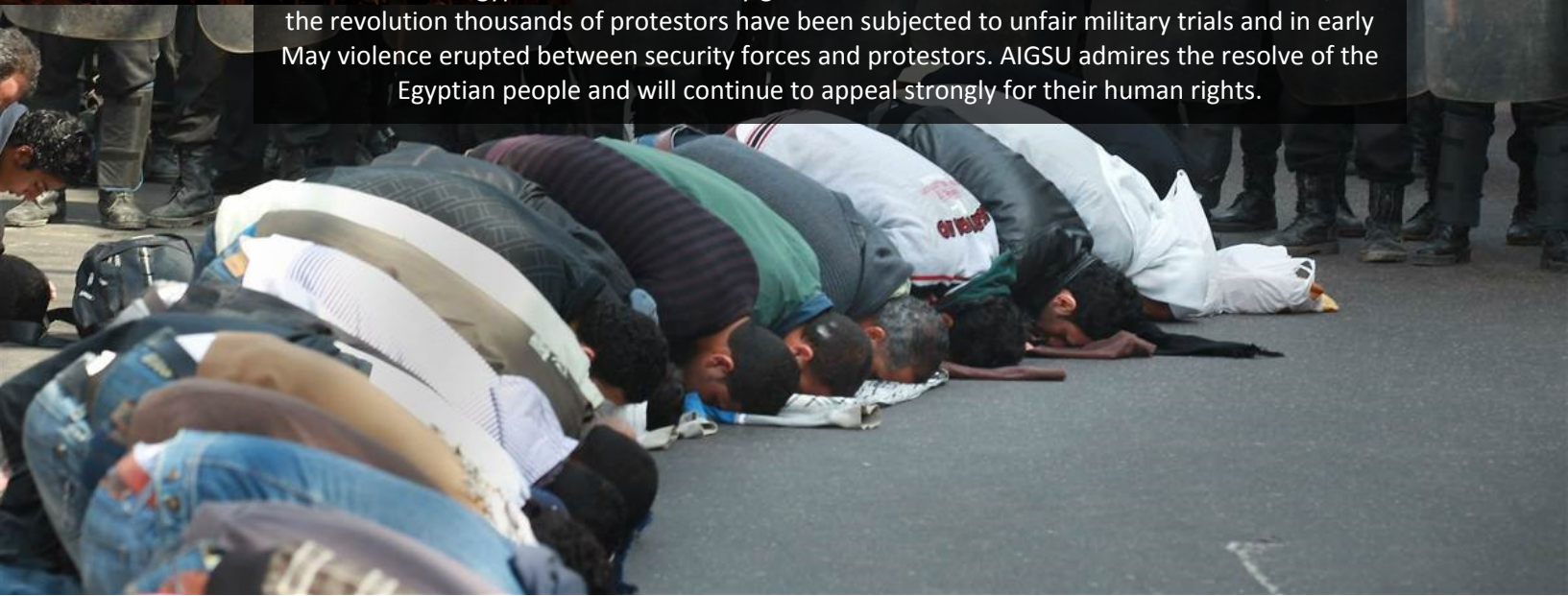


Egypt



Follow-up

On January 25th, 2011 the Egyptian people electrified an entire region through acts of protest that ultimately led to the ousting of long time US-backed dictator Hosni Mubarak. We all shared the joy of the millions of Egyptians who had finally gotten a taste of self-determination. Nonetheless, since the revolution thousands of protestors have been subjected to unfair military trials and in early May violence erupted between security forces and protestors. AIGSU admires the resolve of the Egyptian people and will continue to appeal strongly for their human rights.



amnesty international at georgia southern university

1332 Southern Drive
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02/11/11

Lt. Mohamed Hussein Tantawi
Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces
Supreme Council of the Armed Forces
23, Khaleefa Al-maamon -Kobri El Kobba
Cairo, Egypt

Dear Lt. Tantawi,

The Egyptian citizens set a wheel into motion on 25th January, the *Day of Anger*, and it continues to turn through the *Friday of Anger*, the *March of the Millions*, the *Day of Departure* and who knows through how many more days yet to come. We understand that your government is under tremendous pressure to ensure the safety of the Egyptian people, and in times like these, it may be necessary to employ armed security forces to quell rioting. However, such a necessity does not justify any violation of basic human rights.

Reports from Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have cited violations of human rights committed by Cairo's law enforcement officials. We are shocked to hear of the brutality of plainclothes security forces storming into densely crowded areas of Tahrir Square on horseback, pelting people with sharpened rocks and burning them with Molotov cocktails, leaving many severely bruised and bloodied. Reports have surfaced of hostile mobs ambushing journalists, looting museums, and subjecting human rights workers to unlawful detentions at the Hisham Mubarak Law Centre. It has been revealed that several pro-government aggressors have used live ammunition against protestors, inflicting serious wounds. Adding to the worry are reports that say injured protestors have been turned away from treatment. We grieve the death of 302 civilians, the harassment of over 100 journalists, the unlawful detention of over 30 civilians, the physical assault of 26 civilians, and the seizure of the camera equipment of video reporters. These confrontations threaten the safety of Egyptians exercising their right to peaceable assembly.

Such use of force is inconsistent with internationally accepted human rights standards such as provisions 4 and 7 of the *Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials* (UN 8th Congress, 1990). These provisions state that law enforcement officials shall "as far as possible, apply non-violent means before resorting to the use of force and firearms", and "ensure that arbitrary or abusive use of force and firearms by law enforcement officials is punished as a criminal offense under the law." Also, provision 8 of the *Basic Principles* strictly forbids "exceptional circumstances such as internal political instability [to be] invoked to justify any departure from these basic principles."

Out of anxious concern for Egyptians, we urge that all law enforcement authorities of the Arab Republic of Egypt and pro-government aggressors abide by the principles stated in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, and the *Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials*. We insist that the local security forces and the army fulfill their constitutional duty to protect civilians from physical harm and violation of their rights.

As we understand, law enforcement authorities are there to protect the rights of citizens, not to violate them. A government that violates the rights of its people is only wounding itself, because government *is* the people. We hope we can all agree on this matter. We continue to wait for justice in the streets of Egypt.

Yours Sincerely,
Amnesty International at Georgia Southern University



Iraq

Follow-up

The protests that erupted in Iraq this March illustrated the drive for authentic democracy among Iraqis in spite of a brutal US occupation. While the protests have subsided, President Obama has stood by his decision to begin troop withdrawal by July 2011. Nonetheless, AIGSU will not slack in its efforts to make sure the universal human rights of the Iraqi people are respected.



amnesty international at georgia southern university

1332 Southern Drive
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03/08/11

The Embassy of the Republic of Iraq
3421 Massachusetts Ave., N.W
Washington, D.C. 20007

The world watched on February 11, 2011 as thousands of Egyptian citizens camped in Tahrir Square erupted in shouts of joy as long time president, Hosni Mubarak, stepped down after 18 days of fiery protest. As the dust settles from this *Day of Rage* in Egypt, another people's movement is swelling to the east in yet another Tahrir Square in Iraq.

Inspired by the people's revolt in Egypt, thousands of Iraqis have spilled into the streets from the capital city of Baghdad to the northern province of Mosul. Against visible threats of violence, the Iraqi people have peacefully demanded changes to what they view as a culture of impunity that has materialized in the form of governmental corruption, torture, extra-judicial killings, sub-standard living conditions, and a string of related human rights abuses that have ravaged several communities.

These human rights abuses have been amply documented by such reputable organizations as *Human Rights Watch,* which issued a report on February 25th stating that "since February 16 security forces have killed more than a dozen protesters and injured more than 150 at demonstrations throughout Iraq." Further reports have documented the unlawful killings of "at least three" civilians and "wounding [of] more than 12" protesters by security forces in the town of Hawijah north of Baghdad. As of February 27th the death toll stands at 29 people.

Amnesty International at Georgia Southern University finds this unwarranted use of force on the part of Iraqi security forces unacceptable and in direct contradiction to principles as outlined in the *United Nations Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms*, the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, and other international human rights standards. For this reason, we are urging accountability for these violations and demand that security forces adhere to the principle in the Iraqi constitution that protects the "freedom of assembly and peaceful demonstration."

Millions of people watched as the citizens of Tunisia and Egypt demonstrated how democratic expressions of peaceable assembly are essential or those willing to bring about a more just, egalitarian society. The people in Iraq are making their appeal for justice as participants in the same legacy of strength through non-violence. With the reasonable cooperation of the Iraqi government, we have great confidence that the wave of joy that swept through Egypt and Tunisia can reach Iraq, allowing the world to witness the dynamism of authentic democracy once again.

Yours Sincerely,

Amnesty International at Georgia Southern University



Follow-up

After hearing the planned closing of the Alpha School in East New York, AIGSU wrote a letter to New York governor Cuomo to appeal for state funding of the institution . Since sending the letter, the situation with the Alpha school remains unknown due to a lack of media coverage. AIGSU will continue to defend education as a necessary right under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

New York



A I G S U

07/26/2011

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo,

In this period of economic strain, it is understandable that large sectors of the population will endure hardships which dramatically affect the makeup of their cities, businesses, and communities. Nevertheless, in times such as these State agencies often make decisions which work against the interest of its citizens by implementing policies that deprive the population of social services needed for their uplift.

A situation of this kind has emerged in the recent decision by the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse to discontinue funding the Alpha School located in the Brooklyn borough of East New York. This educational facility, headed by Mr. Barry Addison, was founded to provide GED's for at risk youth and has long been a tremendous asset to East New York. For over three decades the Alpha School has remained steadfast in preventing vulnerable youth from engaging in gang activities, substance abuse, and other forms of delinquency.

The $367,000.00 of annual funding from the OASA has done much to sustain the institution up to this point. Unfortunately, the OASA has cited budget constraints in their decision to defund the school. An investigation into the agency's decision has shown that a clerical error, which wrongly recorded that the program was working with less than 40 students each year when in actuality they were working with over 140 students, played a major role in their choice to defund the institution.

Amnesty International at Georgia Southern University is making this appeal to the State of New York to halt the scheduled closing of the Alpha School so that the program can resume for fall semester. In dire times such as these, the education of our nation's youth is of paramount importance in contributing to the health and development of our population. To allow an institution like the Alpha School to close its doors could prove detrimental not only to East New York but to the state as a whole. Several public figures have voiced their support in preserving the Alpha school. Notable supporters include Senator John Sampson of New York, Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz, Officer Jeffrey Maddrey of Brooklyn's 75th precinct, Kings County District Attorney Charles Hynes, and Robert Zweig of the Department of Education. As proponents of education as a necessary right under the rubric of universal human rights, Amnesty International at Georgia Southern University has great confidence in the State of New York and trusts that a decision in regards to this matter will be made in the interest of its citizens.

Yours Sincerely,
Amnesty International at Georgia Southern University

Amnesty International at Georgia Southern University
1332 Southern Drive, Statesboro, GA 30460, US | amnesty.gs@gmail.com | georgiasouthern.edu/orgs/aigsu



Follow-up

In February, AIGSU was disturbed to hear the plans of the Obama administration to deport 700 Haitian immigrants. Sadly, this campaign of deportation has continued uninterrupted. The media backlash against publicizing this issue was shown on May 25th when CBS news made a last minute decision to axe an ad criticizing this policy. CBS claimed it was "too controversial." AIGSU will continue to shed light on these acts of cruelty in spite of the silence it has been receiving.

Haiti

amnesty international at georgia southern university

1332 Southern Drive
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02/22/11

Director John Morton
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
500 12th St., SW
Washington, D.C. 20536

Dear Mr. Morton,

Historically, the Republic of Haiti has long been on the receiving end of disaster. From chattel slavery under French colonialism to grave injustices endured under autocratic rule, Haiti has had an unusually intimate relationship with the catastrophic. The most recent episode in this harrowing record unfolded on January 12, 2010 when a 7.0 magnitude earthquake rocked the capital city of Port Au Prince leaving an estimated 222,750 people dead, 1.6 million people displaced, and the infrastructure of the city in shambles. Afterwards hurricanes worsened the situation.

In the following months, the conditions of life in Haiti began to decline rapidly as disorder engulfed the rubble filled streets, sweltering forests, and makeshift tent camps, arousing fear in the hearts of Haitians. Soon masked bandits began kidnapping, beating and raping women. Gonaives, the third largest city of Haiti, has been rendered virtually uninhabitable. The nation's agriculture has been largely destroyed and many of its children have starved to death. A cholera epidemic has claimed the lives of over 3,000 people. Mr. Wildrick Guerrier, a Haitian immigrant deported from the United States this past January, has died of this disease after spending days in an overcrowded prison. Furthermore, the Haitian government is not cooperating with the deported Haitians and is placing them in camps.

For these reasons, Amnesty International at Georgia Southern is deeply dismayed by the news that the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement has chosen to resume the deportations of approximately 700 Haitian immigrants. We understand that these individuals have been designated as "criminal aliens" and the preservation of civil order is essential when safeguarding the rights of US citizens but we feel that this decision goes against firmly held tenets of humanitarian law. The *American Convention on Human Rights* explicitly states that "every person has the right to have his physical, mental, and moral integrity respected" and that "no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman, or degrading punishment or treatment" (Article 5, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights). As the USA deports Haitians, it is forcing them into a situation where they will be subjected to cruel and inhuman treatment, debilitating injuries, and in many cases, certain death. This is displayed in the prisons that await Haitian immigrants upon arrival in Port Au Prince. These prisons are overpopulated, crawling with bacteria, and without clean drinking water.

Amnesty International at Georgia Southern University is urging that the mass removals of Haitian immigrants cease until civil order and health standards are re-established. The natives of Haiti have enough challenges to face as it is. Fortunately, those Haitians who reside in the United States are not subject to the same struggles and these individuals can only remain free from these struggles with your cooperation. We trust that you will decide on this matter in accordance with the guiding principles of the ICE to "promote homeland security and public safety" while also ensuring that the human rights of Haitian immigrants are adequately protected.

Yours Sincerely,

Amnesty International at Georgia Southern University



Follow-up

Since crushing the protests, King Abdullah has made some economic concessions in the millions of dollars but the US-backed King continues to make human rights abuses. The most recent abuse was the detainment of a Saudi woman for the harmless act of driving a car. We will definitely continue our focus on this nation.

Saudi Arabia



amnesty international at georgia southern university

1332 Southern Drive
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3/23/11

Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia
601 New Hampshire Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20037

As the ethos of revolt continues to ripple throughout the Middle East and North Africa, the prospect of widespread democracy has reached a historical tipping point. The populations of this embattled region have engaged in peaceful acts of protest to forge a brighter future for themselves and their descendents. The situation is no different for the people of Saudi Arabia.

Unfortunately, these acts of civil disobedience have led some regimes, including Saudi Arabia, to violently suppress lawful acts of dissent. These acts of repression, designed to silence their citizens' demands, do not conform to the tenets of international law and violates the basic principles outlined in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

For these reasons, Amnesty International at Georgia Southern University urges the Saudi government to suspend the law that bans all public protest, since the enforcement of this law is a fundamental assault on the human rights of Saudi citizens. We are also appealing for the immediate release of 20 protestors detained on March 3rd in the eastern town of Qatif. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a signatory of the *Arab Charter for Human Rights* which explicitly states that "all citizens have the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association" and that "no restrictions shall be placed on the exercise of this right unless so required by the exigencies of national security, public safety or the need to protect the rights and freedoms of others" (Article 28). As recently as March 15th, Saudi forces moved into Bahrain to help the royal family suppress the citizens protesting there. This too is a breach of people's peaceful right to protest. We urge that the Saudi government withdraw the troops deployed there.

In the context of the *Arab Charter for Human Rights*, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and other standards of international law, these recent exercises of peaceable assembly do not pose any threat to the national security of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia or the freedoms of others. Conversely, the stifling of these peaceful expressions serves only to escalate tensions, increase the possibility of violence, and endanger national security to a much greater extent than if the protests are allowed to continue. Therefore, it would be in the national interest of Saudi Arabia to allow its citizens to voice their grievances.

The people of North Africa and the Middle East have risen up to loudly affirm the empowering effect of non-violent resistance. Their resolve in the face of unjustified uses of power reflects a deep understanding of the very principles that their governments profess. If the Saudi government decides to enforce its ban on public protest it would not only reflect a failure to understand these principles but a categorical rejection of the rights that these principles entail. In short, this decision would be a violation of international law. Much worse, it would send out a message of 'might is right', much like when the Quraysh used brute force to stifle the message of Prophet Muhammad. In doing so, the Saudi government will lack any moral ground to stand on. Amnesty International at Georgia Southern supports the basic human rights of the Saudi people and we anticipate the day when the Saudi government suspends this ban, allowing its citizens to exercise their right of peaceful assembly.

Yours Sincerely,

Amnesty International at Georgia Southern University

AIGSU
amnesty international at georgia southern university

1332 Southern Drive
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Petition
Stop the Violence in Libya!

Over the last few days, hundreds of protesters have reportedly been killed in Libya in the midst of large scale anti-government protests. Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Gaddafi and his government appear to be prepared to kill an unlimited number of people to stay in power. The international community should act now to put a stop to the bloodshed. US government officials should play a leadership role at the United Nations to ensure that it imposes a total arms embargo on Libya and sends a mission there immediately to investigate the violence.
More info:
http://blog.amnestyusa.org/middle-east/security-council-and-arab-league-must-act-on-libyan-crimes-today/

Recipients:

Susan Rice, US representative to the United Nations - usa@un.int
Esther Brimmer, Assistant Secretary - iomailbox@state.gov

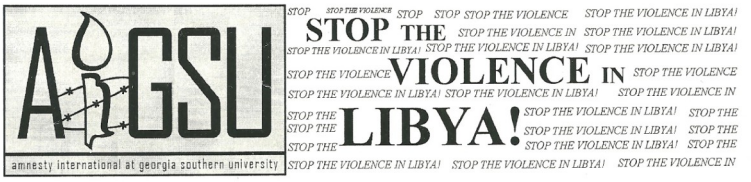
Letter:

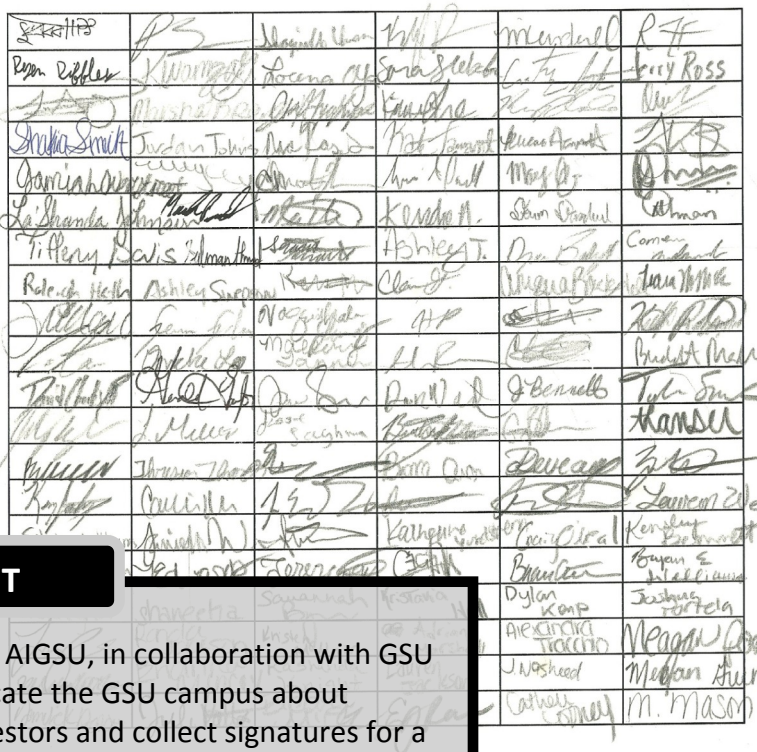
We urge you to play a leadership role within the United Nations, both at the Security Council and the Human Rights Council, to ensure that a mission is sent to Libya immediately to investigate events that have left hundreds of protesters dead.

Colonel al-Gaddafi and his government appear to be prepared to kill an unlimited number of people to stay in power. The international community needs to act now to put a stop to this. The international community must immediately make it clear to all those in the Libyan government, military and security apparatus that they and those carrying out their orders will be held to account for crimes under international law, such as those now being reported.

Additionally, the UN Security Council must put an immediate end
transfer of all arms and military e quipment to Libya until the risk of ser
violations has ended. All states will e complicit in further killings if they do not cease transfers
immediately.

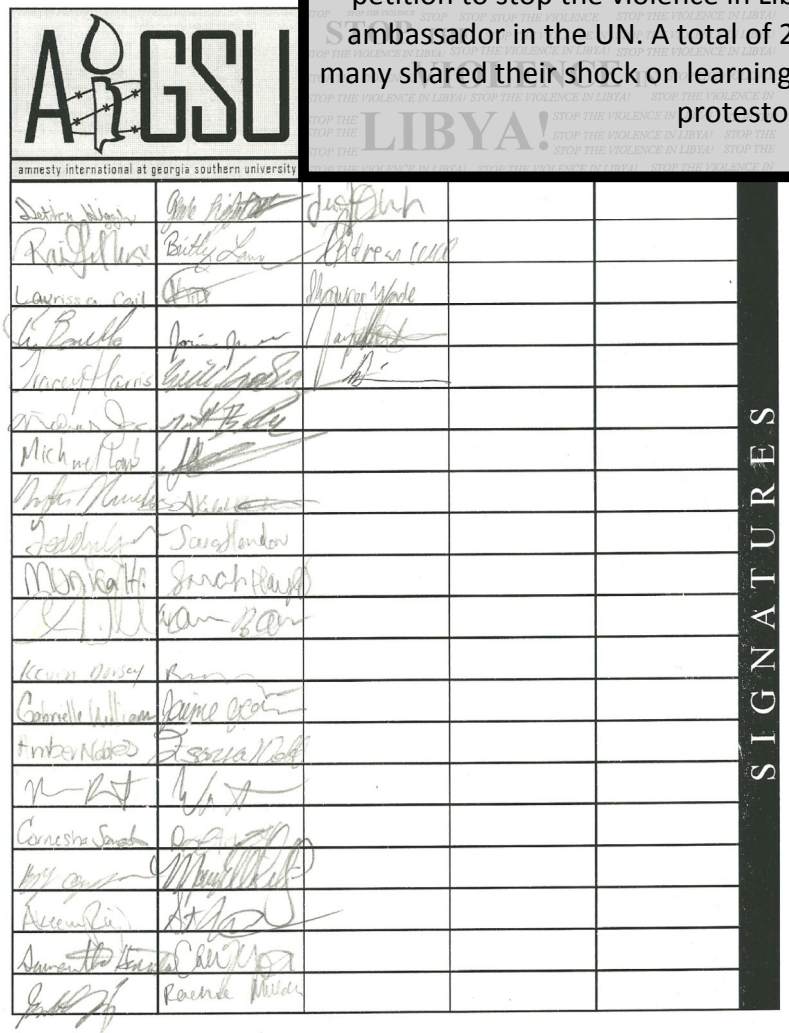
Signed by,
Board of Signatories,
Amnesty International at Georgia Southern University

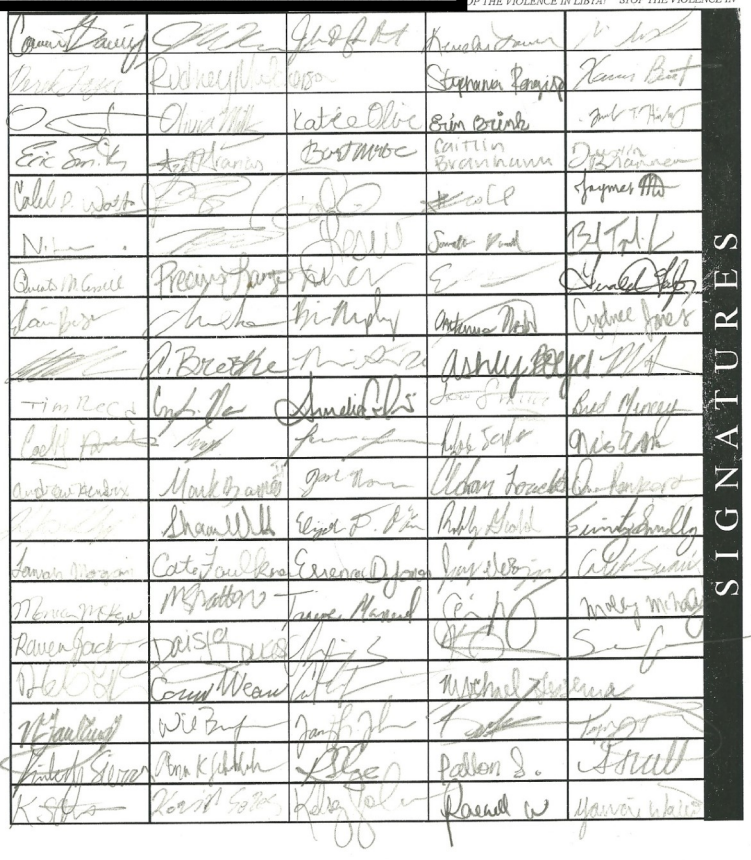




EVENT

On 28 March 2011, the signatories of AIGSU, in collaboration with GSU STAND, came together to educate the GSU campus about Gaddafi's crackdown on Libyan protestors and collect signatures for a petition to stop the violence in Libya. This petition was sent to the US ambassador in the UN. A total of 265 students signed the petition and many shared their shock on learning about the brutal treatment of civilian protestors in Libya.





"We, the Ordinary People"

Transcript of Xavier Best's Speech in tribute to the Events in Middle East and North Africa



For the past four months, North Africa and the Middle East have seen courageous, ordinary people demanding human rights through non-violent mass protests. These profound acts of civil disobedience have empowered an entire region of people from the thriving crowds in Tahrir Square to the rebel outposts in Libya. Since the first rumblings of this democratic tide in January, these brave citizens have been destroying old stereotypes: Christianity vs. Islam, fundamentalism vs. secularism, medieval vs. modern, male vs. female, first world vs. third world, the black hijab vs. the rainbow bikini.

Who can forget that February night when thousands of Egyptian citizens marched the streets, chanting "Muslim, Christian, We are all Egyptian". Indeed, this sense of togetherness upset the old prejudices of our society. For once, it was a people's movement, everyday, ordinary people, people like you and me.

Right now we have an authentic people's movement against autocracy, torture, poverty, joblessness, censorship, and other human right violations, all of which were silently supported by Western democracies - America, Italy, France and many others. The uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa was not only a challenge to dictators and kings, but also a challenge to the idea of democracy itself, the democracy of the industrialized West.

The people's resistance in the Middle East and North Africa should inspire us to reexamine what our leaders - Obama, Clinton, Berlusconi, Sarkozy - mean when they talk about democratization and freedom. Does democracy mean strongly condemning atrocities in Iran while turning a blind eye to killings in Bahrain? Is it democracy when Obama calls Hosni Mubarak a "proud patriot" who "cares about his country" at the same time when innocent Egyptian civilians are being slain by security forces? Does democracy mean signing a $60 billion dollar arms deal with Saudi Arabia, as the monarchy continues to oppress its people? Tonight, tomorrow and in the coming days, we should ask these uncomfortable questions in tribute to the men and women who were killed in the ongoing revolution.

In addition to the political triumphs of this revolution, there have been equally important philosophical triumphs. A critical consciousness has appeared in people. Take the example of Zaneb Alkhawaja, the Bahraini human rights activist. After having her family unjustly imprisoned, Zaneb went on a nine day hunger strike. This shattered the long held stereotypes of the violent Arab, the submissive woman, or the suicidal obedient woman who carries a bomb under her veil.

The significance of these revolutionary movements is that they stand out as beacons of hope. In a world where justice is only for the privileged, equality is only for the better-offs and human rights is just a question of economics (gas price and what not), a mass protest for democracy is a threat to injustice everywhere in the world, from the oppression of indigenous people in India to the discrimination towards indigenous people in America. The genius of the Arab revolution is that it has dared to demand democracy in the midst of dictators. Instead of waiting for US marines to bestow the gifts of democracy (which is going 'pretty well' in Afghanistan), the middle eastern masses have stood up for themselves.

As we light our candles at this vigil let us remember the hundreds who have been massacred in Syria fighting for human rights. The death toll in Syria has passed 500 and many more have been tortured. On April 22nd alone 76 civilians were reported to have been killed. Although the Syrian people have won some victories with the lifting of the Emergency Law, extra-judicial killings are still taking place under the Assad regime. Much like the other revolutionaries engaged in this historical struggle the Syrian people deserve our support.

Judging from the events happening on the international stage, certainly, now is the time to bridge the divide between thoughts and actions. It is time for us to speak up. It is time for us to support those who are standing up for their rights. It is time for us to raise uncomfortable questions, no matter which side of the Atlantic we are on. Let the memories of the departed enrich our hearts and clear our thoughts. Let us become proactive. Let us remember that the united efforts of ordinary people can bring about extraordinary results.

To watch a video of the event, search "Vigil for Syria, Libya and Yemen at Georgia Southern University" in YouTube

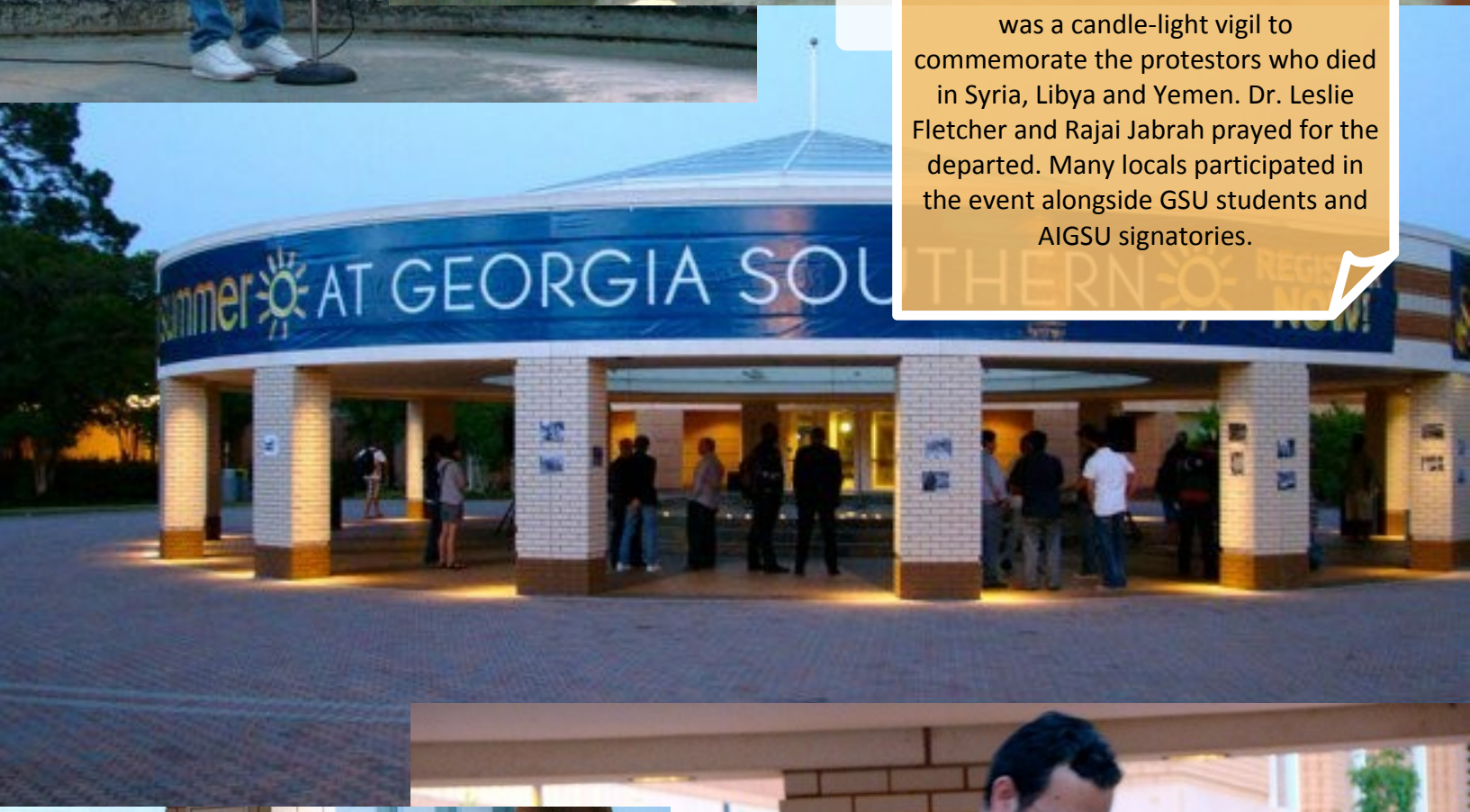






EVENT

On 4 May 2011, Xavier Best, representing AIGSU, presented a speech titled 'We, the Ordinary People' at Vigil for Syria, Libya, Yemen organized by GSU Muslim Student Association. This was a candle-light vigil to commemorate the protestors who died in Syria, Libya and Yemen. Dr. Leslie Fletcher and Rajai Jabrah prayed for the departed. Many locals participated in the event alongside GSU students and AIGSU signatories.







THE DOCTOR WHOM THE STATE FEARS



Naxalites holding a people's court in a tribal district of Orissa

Follow-up

In good news, beloved physician and human rights activist, Binayak Sen has been released from prison. AIGSU is deeply pleased by the decision of the courts to release Dr. Sen. Dr. Sen's dedication to uplift the indigenous people in India is a testament to the compassion and solidarity that is desperately needed in today's world. AIGSU is honored to have been a part of his campaign for freedom.

Over 18 months after his incarceration, doctor and activist Binayak Sen is still languishing in jail without any evidence against him. Here's why he is feared by the government

By **Poornima Joshi**

BINAYAK SEN was a human rights activist who worked many years with tribals of Chhattisgarh districts. His crime? The tribals had made a man who did what the state not. To the government, who backed the Maoists, he must be silenced.

Binayak Sen has been in jail since May 14, 2007. His incarceration is based on the official charge that he passed messages from jailed Maoists to their outside leaders. It is likely that as a human rights activist and doctor who worked among the poor, he was seen as a bulwark against the state's human rights violations in the area.

Binayak, a graduate of the Christian Medical College (CMC), Vellore, and a fellow of the Global Health Council for his work in health for poor and tribal communities, took leadership in establishing self-sustaining health services where none existed, and the courage to stand up against the state.

It is Binayak's work among the poor, his agitation to ensure that the state is accountable for police atrocities, that makes him dangerous. His arrest eliminates a powerful critique of the state's failure to provide for the poor and establishes Chief Minister Raman Singh and his colleagues as a ruler who would squash any voice that questions his anti-terror policies.

There is one more purpose that Binayak's arrest. It validates the state's attempt to obliterate the line between Maoists and those who believe that the legal path must be followed even if the state is not. It is a move against Maoists.

"This is a systematic process to eliminate voices of dissent. It is a known fact that as an office-bearer of the People's Union of Civil Liberties (PUCL), Binayak was a strong critic of the inhuman anti-Maoist policies of the Salva Judum. So instead of a democratic, logical response to arguments against such policies, the best thing is to eliminate these voices. You cannot answer the ideology of Binayak when he criticises the government's total indifference to the crumbling healthcare system or Salva Judum. The best thing to do is to brand him as a Maoist and put him in jail," says Kavita Srivastava, PUCL activist from Rajasthan.

Srivastava's claim seems justified when what BJP spokesperson Ravi Shankar Prasad told this correspondent after Binayak was jailed. "Those who have worked for civil liberties organisations. But over the years, most of these activists have become the overground face of the underground. There is no distinction," Prasad said.

This is also the reason why BJP president Rajnath Singh, when he was shown an appeal for Binayak's release signed by 22 Nobel Prize winners, responded thus: "They (the Nobel laureates) do not know the ground realities. I have spoken to the Chief Minister and he says there is enough evidence against Binayak Sen."

The ruling party dismissed every appeal, every gesture by such as the British Commons publication of Day Million entitled Dr. Binayak Sen" supported by several MPs calling for his release on June 7, 2007.

ACCORDING to his wife Ilina Sen, the most disastrous result of Binayak's prolonged incarceration is the slow disintegration of the public health system he struggled to set up in one of the most impoverished areas of the country.

Binayak had arrived in Chhattisgarh in 1981 to join the legendary trade union leader Shankar Guha Niyogi at Dalli-Rajhara. In 1994, Binayak and Ilina started a community health programme at Bagrumnala, a remote tribal village in Dhamtari district. The programme links health work with the people's living conditions, and included provision of low-cost effective health care services.

But the chargesheet filed against him by the Chhattisgarh police depicts his medical work as 'negligible' and 'just a cover'. It depicts Binayak as a Christian missionary', which presumably is a crime, besides being 'unreliable'.

There is a deliberate attempt here, feels Kavita Srivastava, to smear the legacy of Shankar Guha Niyogi, a legend in Chhattisgarh. The action Dalli-Rajhara, Niyogi's ashes are still awaiting for immersion under a relentless flame, a mark of protest, because most of the killers have escaped punishment. On the walls of the house of miners, and in the marketplace, you can see Niyogi's picture along with gods and goddesses and icons. And everybody has his or her own story about the incredible life and times of Niyogi and Binayak.

> "There is a systematic effort under way to eliminate the voices of dissent. It is a known fact that Binayak was a strong critic of inhuman and anti-people policies such as Salva Judum."

Binayak is part of this legend. He is not a violent Maoist. He follows the Niyogi school. Niyogi, a Marxist, used non-violent methods in what can be called a synthesis of the experiments of Lenin, Mao and Gandhi. He injected idealism at the grassroots with the principle of 'Sangharsh aur Nirman' (struggle and development). This is unique in a context where the 'official Marxists' were sucked up by power politics and the underground Maoists were decimated and scattered by State repression. Niyogi thereby ushered in a completely new political discourse, where priorities were shifted locally and collectively, even while the long term struggle continued — non-violently and peacefully, using constitutional and democratic means.

Binayak was part of the movement during which Niyogi and the miners collectively built and sustained schools, roads, public distribution systems, emergency food kitchens for thousands of peasants and workers. The miners at Rajnandgaon were perhaps the best paid and most secure with social safety nets after the protracted struggle.

This was Binayak's singular contribution, while he forsake a cushy, urban existence to work relentlessly for the poor, lived in their humble mud huts and mixed health and human rights in a creative synthesis.

The Chhattisgarh Mukti Morcha (CMM) has grown into a mass movement. The entire region including the town of Ranjandgaon benefited from the movement. Niyogi and Binayak created a new practical grassroots language of struggle and progress for collective sharing.

This is why the political establishment and the big industry resented this creative expansion of a noble experiment which was rapidly showing results, especially in the health, educational and social sectors.That is why Niyogi was murdered. That is also why Binayak is still languishing in prison 18 months after his arrest on flimsy charges that are becoming increasingly difficult to prove. With no evidence against him (*see box*), the government has no legal ground to stand on. But who's listening?



Binayak Sen waves at his supporters as he is taken to the Raipur jail. He has been behind bars for 18 months but the government doesn't have a credible case against him.

THE DUBIOUS CASE AGAINST BINAYAK

According to human rights activities monitoring the trial of Binayak Sen, the deposition by prosecution witnesses examined so far suggested that the main charge against Sen was that he used to meet Narayan Sanyal — an alleged Naxal — frequently in jail and had ferried letters for him.

The fact that a doctor or a lawyer meets an accused is not enough to prove charges against such professionals. Besides, Sen had himself admitted that he used to meet Sanyal in his professional capacity as a doctor. And the second charge was based on a statement by an alleged co-accused which had to be supported by some other evidence.

With questions being raised on the action by the state police and the trial being publicly debated, the prosecution had a moral duty to first produce the most important witnesses after the start of trial. And if some material witnesses did not support their case in such cases, they had no moral right to keep the accused in jail any longer as investigation was already over.

Binayak Sen was arrested by the police on May 14, 2007 after accused Piyush Guha allegedly confessed that letters recovered from his possession were delivered to him by the doctor.

Police had seized the register of hotel Mahindra where it claimed Sen met Guha — a charge that is being denied by the doctor. Police had claimed that Balram Moti, the manager of the hotel was witness to the meeting. But on cross examination, he said he was merely present when the hotel register was seized.

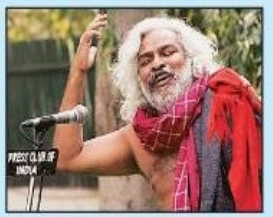
The last entry in the hotel register was dated May 8. But the register was apparently seized by the police on May 7, 2007. The prosecution claimed that there was a postcard written by Sanyal to Sen and eight CDs containing objectionable material.

Opposing his bail before the High Court, the prosecution had alleged that Sen, during his meetings with Sanyal, had "planned to commit unlawful activities in the area of Chhattisgarh and was deeply involved in such acts."

So far, going by the activists watching the trial, police had not produced any witness to prove the charge against Sen. But with the prosecution opposing his bail, Sen continues to languish in jail.

— Gyanant Singh

They are rebels without a pause



Gaddar

Gummadi Vittal Rao, popularly known as Gaddar, is a revolutionary balladeer and leading Naxalite activist, supporting the cause of a separate Telangana. He sings on revolutions and the people's struggle. He survived an assassination attempt in 1997, which he believes was the handiwork of the police. He still carries a bullet in his body. In 2004, Gaddar demanded the handing over of the body of a Naxalite killed in what the police termed as an "encounter". Arrested on the charges of "obstructing" the work of police officials, he was released later.

Roma

A steering committee member of the National Forum of Forest People and Forest Workers, Roma was arrested in August 2007 under the National Security Act for leading an unarmed land rights struggle of *adivasis* and Dalits at Robertsgunj in UP's Sonbhadra district. A leader of the Kaimur Kshetra Mahila Majdoor Kisan Sangharsh Samiti, she educated the landless poor on their constitutional rights. She used the slogan '*Jo zameen sarkari hai, woh zameen humari hai*'. Ironically, the same slogan had been used by UP chief minister Mayawati in 1996. Mayawati got away with the slogan, but Roma was accused of instigating a violent, land-grabbing struggle using the slogan.

Prashant Rahi

A former journalist, Prashant Rahi was arrested on sedition charges in Uttarakhand in December 2007. Rahi was active in the Uttarakhand movement and worked to rehabilitate Tehri dam evacuees. The police have accused him of being a Naxalite leader. His daughter Shikha, who was an assistant director in *Taare Zameen Par* has been waging a lonely battle against his arrest. She claims he was punished for raising his voice against police atrocities, and has been subjected to brutal torture in jail.

Ajay TG

Ajay Thachhappully Gangadharan (Ajay TG), a Raipur-based leading civil liberties activist, film-maker and journalist, was arrested by the Chhattisgarh police in May 2008. He was charged with "being part of an urban network of Naxals" and detained under draconian Special Public Security Act for 90 days. A strong opponent of the state's Salwa Judum, he had made a film on the life, work and arrest of Dr. Binayak Sen.

Shah Chand

After the police killed 23 people by opening fire at a peaceful rally at Arwal in Bihar in 1986, Shah Chand, a member of the Bihar Pradesh Kisan Samiti, began to organise people against the police massacre. In the 2000 assembly elections, he fought on the CPI(ML) ticket and lost to a JD(U) candidate with a narrow margin. Soon after, he was jailed under TADA. He is 65 years old, and human rights activists say he is shunted from one jail to another. —*Neha Tara Mehta*

amnesty international at georgia southern university

1332 Southern Drive
Statesboro, GA 30460,
USA

3/4/11

Shri Manmohan Singh,
Prime Minister of India,
Prime Minister's Office,
Room number 152,
South Block, New Delhi

Dear the Honorable Prime Minister Singh,

In today's highly integrated global climate where once marginalized nations are emerging as prominent players in the international scene, the potential for worldwide recognition of universal human rights has gained new momentum. Since the advent of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, any violation of the rights of citizens of one state invariably calls into question the rights of citizens in another state irrespective of cultures, religions, national boundaries or political differences. International human right is the shared ground we all stand on.

For this reason, Amnesty International at Georgia Southern University is aggrieved by the recent court decision condemning Dr. Binayak Sen to life in prison on December 24, 2010. This case, presided over by Judge B.P. Verma of the 2nd Additional District and Sessions Court of Raipur, charged that Sen contributed to a "criminal conspiracy of sedition against the State."

Numerous testimonies have shown that Dr. Sen is a dedicated human rights defender and physician who lives a life symbolizing the highest ideals of the Republic of India. Reputable organizations such as the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders have attested to the fact that Dr. Sen "is a pioneer of health care to marginalized and indigenous communities in Chhattisgarh, where the state police and armed Maoists have been engaged in clashes over the last seven years." Forty Nobel Prize Laureates have also expressed their solidarity with Dr. Sen through a letter honoring him as an "exceptional, courageous, and selfless colleague, dedicated to helping those in India who are least able to help themselves." Dr. Sen has bravely served the displaced indigenous population in Chhattisgarh and participated in several other welfare activities, and no reasonable court decision would conclude his acts constitute "conspiracy of sedition against the State."

Recognizing this abuse of judicial authority, we demand that the government of Chhattisgarh release Dr. Sen, and bring an end to this travesty of justice. The court's ruling, carried out under the auspices of Section 124(A) of the Indian Penal Code, is a fundamental assault on elementary principles of jurisprudence and on those who aim to defend human rights around the world. Dr. Sen is also a heart patient whose health is likely to worsen the longer he remains jailed. Reversing this unlawful and harmful imprisonment of Dr. Sen, an exemplar of courage befitting the world's largest democracy, will be a step towards sound governance and reason. As Dr. Sen sits in his cell at the Raipur Central Prison, separated from his loved ones and the people who refer to him with admiration as "the physician of the poor," we await the day when he can be reunited with his people so that human rights can once again flourish throughout the villages of India.

Yours Sincerely,

Amnesty International at Georgia Southern University

Cote d'Ivoire



Follow-up

After months of bitter violence, some of the battles in Cote D'Ivoire have calmed down. Following a disputed election, UN recognized winner Alassane Outtara was officially sworn in as the President while former President Laurent Gbagbo was detained by authorities in late April.



04/19/2011

The Embassy of the Republic of the Cote d'Ivoire
2424 Massachusetts Avenue,
NW, Washington DC 20008

In times of national turmoil, it is wise for the governing powers to ensure the safety of civil society from all forms of violence and oppression. Unfortunately, in recent months the escalating armed conflict in Cote d'Ivoire has caused many unnecessary civilian deaths.

For this reason, Amnesty International at Georgia Southern University wishes to express its outrage over the absolute disregard for human life taking place at the hands of Republican forces as well as those forces backing former president Laurent Gbagbo. A lengthy report published by *Human Rights Watch* recounts several atrocities committed by both sides in the conflict.

Among the gruesome findings revealed in this report are the news of bloody massacres in the western region targeting Guere populations and accounts of mass killings in the towns of Blolequin, Ziglo, Duékoué, and Carrefour. The United Nations reports that the death toll in Abidjan alone, as of April 11th, has reached 400 people. Eyewitness accounts tell of men, women, and children being dismembered, disemboweled, and shot by Republican Forces. Ethnic prejudice is said to be motivating the bulk of these atrocities in the western region.

In addition to these unwarranted exercises of military force, reports have surfaced that women are being kidnapped and gang raped. As human rights defenders we find these heinous acts of brutality to be flagrant violations of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, *Protocol II of the 1949 Geneva Conventions*, and other human rights standards. It brings us great dismay to see that the situation has reached this stage.

In order to bring an end to these crimes against humanity, Amnesty International at Georgia Southern University is appealing to both sides to discontinue these reckless uses of force and fulfill their obligations in accordance with international human rights standards. We are also demanding that independent, unbiased authorities carry out an impartial investigation so that the perpetrators of these crimes can be brought to justice. Any failure to meet these demands will cast a dark shadow on the future of Cote d'Ivoire. It will deprive its people of the peace and dignity that they are guaranteed under the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. We hope that both sides will find the moral maturity to end these tragedies.

Yours Sincerely,

Amnesty International at Georgia Southern University

Amnesty International at Georgia Southern University
1332 Southern Drive, Statesboro, GA 30460, US | amnesty.gs@gmail.com | georgiasouthern.edu/orgs/aigsu



Follow-up

Extrajudicial killings continue to take place in Syria as the regime of Bashar al-Assad mounts resistance against pro-democracy protestors. Recent reports show that the death toll has exceeded 1700 people. The US has acted by placing sanctions on the Assad regime. Syrians continue to crowd the streets demanding Assad to step down. AIGSU will continue to follow this story.

Syria

amnesty international at georgia southern university

1332 Southern Drive
Statesboro, GA 30460,
USA

3/30/11

Embassy of Syria
2215 Wyoming Ave. N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008 USA

It is the responsibility of all governments to attend to the demands of their citizens insofar as these demands are made through peaceful means. In fact, the legitimacy of a government depends on how it responds to the demands of its citizens. The awakened citizens of Syria have recently come together to assemble peacefully and petition their government for a redress of long-prevailing grievances.

Tragically, their reasonable voices have been met with brutal assaults by the Syrian security force, causing massive bloodshed in the streets of Syria. Amnesty International at Georgia Southern University is outraged by the Syrian security force's repressive acts and the Syrian government's attempt to crush peaceful dissent.

Human Rights Watch and the International Federation for Human Rights have issued reports detailing numerous human rights violations by Syrian forces. These abuses include firing live ammunition at heavily crowded areas, running over protestors with emergency vehicles, enforcing a blackout on all modes of communication and detaining students, activists, journalists and intellectuals without warrant. Media footage has emerged from the embattled streets of Daraa showing men sprawled in the street, bleeding profusely, and a young man drenched in blood being carried away while rapid gunfire can be heard in the surrounding areas. We are appalled by the killings of seven people that took place at the Omari mosque and the reckless use of tear gas to disperse civilians in the aftermath of a funeral commemorating the deaths of Wissam Ayyash and Mahmoud al-Jawabra. As of March 24, 2011 eyewitness accounts state that more than 100 people have been killed and 93 people have been arrested. We find these vicious attacks against law-abiding citizens unacceptable and in direct contradiction to established principles as stated in the United Nations *Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials*, Article 21 of *the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, and other international human rights standards.

Recent events in the Middle East and North Africa have demonstrated that when a government resorts to the use of force against civilians who are within the limits of law, the government loses its legitimacy. The continued violation of the Syrian people's basic human rights endangers the legitimacy of the Syrian government and betrays its responsibilities as a member of the international community. For these reasons, we urge the Syrian government to immediately cease these acts of violence, release all civilians who have been unlawfully detained, and restore all modes of communication so that human rights and justice may prevail.

Yours Sincerely,

Amnesty International at Georgia Southern University



Follow-up

Bahraini human rights activist, Zaneb Alkhawaja, called off her hunger strike after eleven days of civil protest. Unfortunately, the whereabouts of her family is still unknown at this moment and repression continues to sweep across the country. Hundreds have been killed and many more are missing. AIGSU salutes Zaneb's courage and will continue following her and Bahrain's story.

Bahrain

A I G S U

05/05/11

United States Mission to the United Nations
Ambassador Susan Rice
140 East 45th Street
New York, N.Y. 10017

Dear Ambassador Rice,

At the moment, the nation of Bahrain is under oppression at the hands of a monarchy that has imposed martial law, banning peaceful assembly. As a result of this shameless disregard for human rights, many crimes have been carried out against Bahranian citizens, including shooting at protestors and unlawful detentions.

Among those arrested were the father, husband, uncle, and brother-in-law of Bahraini activist, Zainab Alkhawaja. Zainab's father, Abdulhadi Alkhawaja, is a prominent human rights advocate and heads the Bahraini Center for Human Rights. Abdulhadi's arrest on April 9th has brought much grief to his loved ones and has caused his daughter, Zainab, to go on a hunger strike for eleven days. Although Zainab has recently ended the hunger strike, she has become very weak and unless her demand for her family's release is met we fear that her health will deteriorate rapidly.

Amnesty International at Georgia Southern University is disturbed by these recent developments, as they constitute grave violations of universal human rights. The support that the United States government has provided to the Bahraini monarchy and the mild statements made by the United States as it relates to Bahrain's violations of human rights go sharply against elementary standards of international law.

For these reasons, Amnesty International at Georgia Southern University is appealing to the government of the United States to pressure the Bahraini monarchy to secure the release of Zainab's family and the many other peaceful citizens who have been unjustly arrested under this current state of martial law. Hundreds and thousands of people like Zainab have voiced their demands for some measure of justice and the continued silence of the United States has played an active role in stifling these struggles towards democratization.

This being said, we are appealing to the United States government to act as a responsible member of the international community and fulfill its obligations under the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. Failing to take a stand against this aggressive injustice would constitute a fundamental assault on the civil liberties of Bahrainis and other disenfranchised people around the world. We hope that you will consider the situation and act accordingly so that the turmoil in Bahrain can reach a peaceful resolution.

Yours Sincerely,

Amnesty International at Georgia Southern University

Amnesty International at Georgia Southern University
1332 Southern Drive, Statesboro, GA 30460, US | amnesty.gs@gmail.com | georgiasouthern.edu/orgs/aigsu

Yemen



Follow-up

Since the massive protests in Yemen, many parts of the country remain mired in uncertainty and violence. Wounded in a bombing, Ali Saleh left the country. Mr. Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi is now serving as Yemen's president. Mr. Hadi will remain in power for 60 days, until a historic election takes place. With the rise of violence in Syria and Libya, Yemen received less media coverage during summer. AIGSU will continue to follow the fight for justice in Yemen.

A I G S U

06/12/2011

Embassy of the Republic of Yemen
2319 Wyoming Avenue Northwest
Washington D.C., DC 20008

When the population of a state assembles peacefully to voice their grievances against what they see as a violation of their universal human rights, it is the task of the governing body to respond to these protests in a manner which does not employ methods of violence. Unfortunately, the protests unfolding in Yemen have pushed this Gulf state into the possibility of a civil war.

Since these democratic protests began about four months ago at least 320 people have been violently killed by state backed security forces. Amnesty International at Georgia Southern University finds this total disregard for elementary human rights alarming and unacceptable by all standards of international law. The brutal killing of 50 peaceful protesters in Taiz and the firing of heavy artillery shells into residential areas illustrate the government's utter contempt for the safety of Yemeni people. Government authorities have repeatedly raised the threat of terrorism to justify its aggressive policies of control while skirting their responsibilities as rulers of a sovereign state. These responsibilities must be fulfilled in within the bounds of reason and *the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

As signatories of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Republic of Yemen is legally obligated to safeguard the human rights of protestors by respecting the physical integrity, individual liberties, and political rights of its civil society. This respect for human rights should include a lifting of the emergency law, which Amnesty International has cited for giving security forces the power to exercise "extensive powers of detention without being bound by the Criminal Procedure Law" and "suspend, seize and confiscate "all media… and means of expression."

Indiscriminate acts of violence will contribute nothing to the government's will to end these protests. In fact, these very acts of violence sharply undermine the legitimacy of the government and unless halted will earn the Yemeni government more condemnation from the international community. If the protests in the Middle East and North Africa have demonstrated anything, it is the effectiveness of non-violent protest as a vehicle for implementing socio-political reform in an environment beset by many different forms of injustice. The peaceful protesters of Yemen are taking part in this realization and we urge that the government can also come to this understanding by bringing an end to the repression.

Yours Sincerely,
Amnesty International at Georgia Southern University

Amnesty International at Georgia Southern University
1332 Southern Drive, Statesboro, GA 30460, US | amnesty.gs@gmail.com | georgiasouthern.edu/orgs/aigsu

We think...



Sex trafficking is a huge problem and it happens worldwide, to men, women, girls, and boys. I have a friend who is quite active in STOP (Sex Trafficking Opposition Project). But something I am aware of is an issue right here in the States and this one point is quite close to GSU, physically speaking. Interstate 75 is a major trafficking route (human, drug, and wild-life) in this country, starting at Miami, Florida and ending... I believe somewhere in Ohio.
— Anna Hagemeyer





Human rights I am currently concerned about? Honestly I am still horrified about what's going on in Sudan. Invisible children has reached millions of people and it is still going on. First of all the government is killing its own people and children are being brainwashed!
— Anni Rainio

Human trafficking is probably the most disturbing yet ignored human rights issue. Nobody likes to talk about it- like a tied-up and tortured foreigner in your basement who should stay quiet lest we open our eyes to its suffering.
— Gustavo Rodriguez

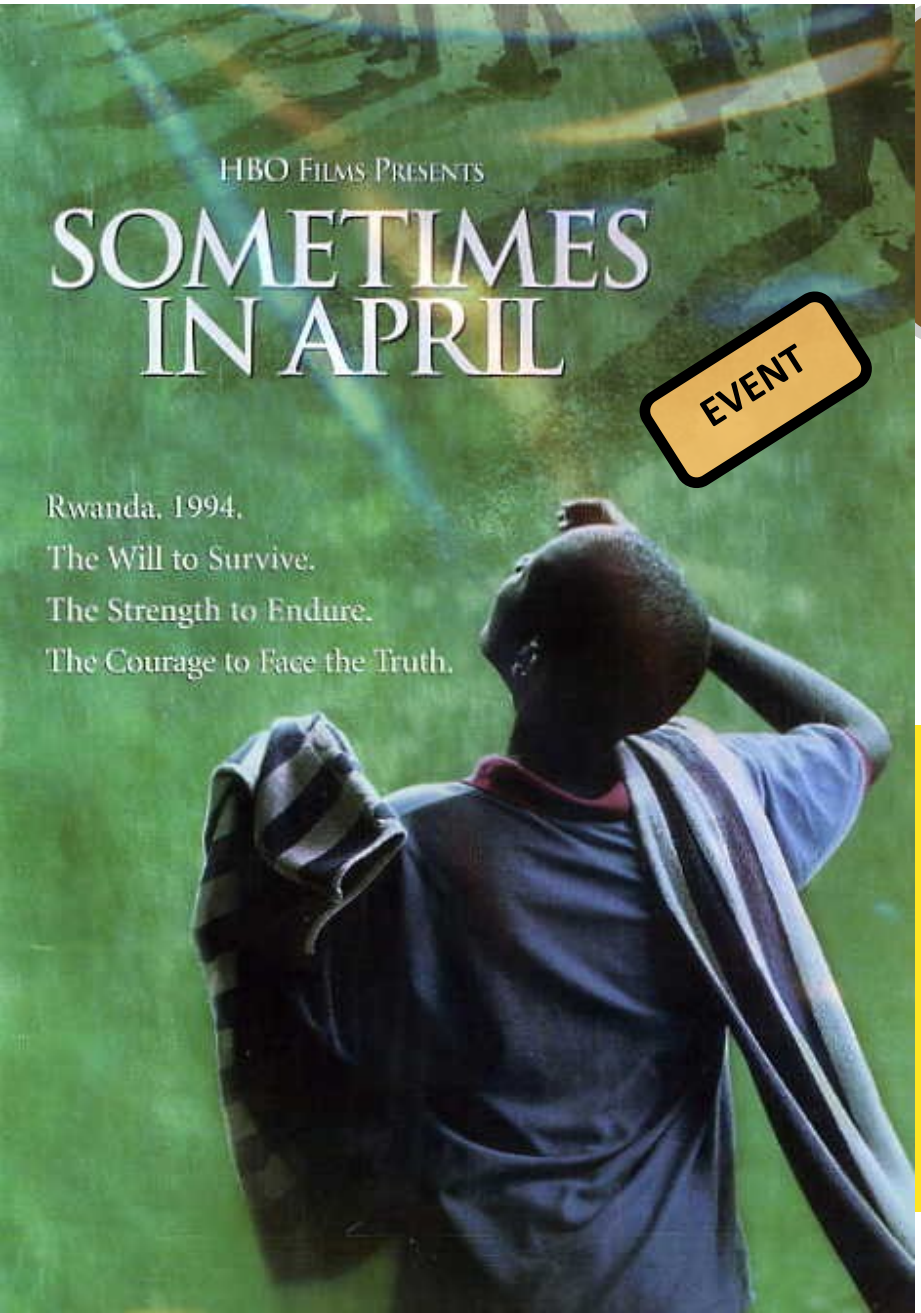
These are interesting times we are witnessing for people in the Middle East and North Africa. So many countries' citizens are currently protesting against their authoritarian powers that it is difficult to determine what should be done, from a foreign policy standpoint. Looking at our current 'interests' per se and involvement in Libya, it definitely begs the question of everyone of when the appropriate time is to get involved or intervene is. Genocide and severe human rights violations are currently so rampant that it is difficult to grasp an adequate solution. Though at the moment, I am most concerned with what is taking place in the Ivory Coast. We generally tend to think of modern wars in terms of morality, in which there is a clear side to take and defend. Unfortunately, after intervention from the UN and the French government, atrocities on large scales continue to be committed by both sides in the Ivory Coast. Taking sides in any conflict can have unforeseen consequences, as the United States learned from funding the Mujahideen during the Cold War. — Adam Lowendick



Financial Statement

	USD
Initial Deposit from the Officers	100.00
Withdrawal for Fundraiser	21.37
Deposit from Fundraiser	54.00
Current Balance	**132.63**

For our video commemorating the deaths of Egyptian protestors, search "In Commemoration of Egyptian Revolution 2011 Protestors" in YouTube



On 28 April 2011, AIGSU helped STAND host a free movie event. Sometimes in April is a HBO film about the tragic events that transpired during the Rwandan genocide. There was a great turnout from students. It was an evening well spent.

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